Public Document

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30, 1918

BOSTON
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS
32 DERNE STREET
1919

HV1796
M39

Working in competition with the seeing. Edging leather, Graton & Knight Manufacturing Company, Worcester.

Public Document No. 122

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Twelfth Annual Report

For the Year ended November 30, 1918

BOSTON
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS
32 DERNE STREET
1919

Publication of this Document
approved by the
Supervisor of Administration.

H.V.796
M39
Let-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Personnel of Board and staff with list of offices, shops, etc.,	5
Report of Commission: —	
Change of location,	10
Change of staff,	10
The survey of the blind in three counties,	12
Proposed legislation: —	
Relief,	15
Home teaching,	15
Sight-saving classes for children,	15
Children: —	
State, city and town authorities,	18
Schools,	19
Classes for conservation of vision in our public schools,	20
Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary,	20
Some results,	21
Prevention of blindness,	21
Home teaching: —	
Statistics of the home teaching department,	22
Salesmanship course,	22
Employment in subsidized shops: —	
Cambridge industries: —	
Broom department,	23
Rug department,	23
Wundermop shop,	23
Dowel shop,	24
Basket shop,	24
Rattan department,	24
Rise of wages,	24
Local shops: —	
Worcester shop,	25
Fall River shop,	25
Lowell shop,	25
Pittsfield shop,	26
Woolson House industries,	26
Employment,	26
Salesroom,	27
Employment in competition with the seeing,	27
Industrial summary,	29
Financial report,	30
Summary of activities,	34
Conclusion,	34
Special report,	39

Appendix. —

PAGE

Reorganization, ... 43
Foreign blind, ... 44
An illustration of a child found through the reports of the State census, 45
Suggestions regarding conditions and diseases of the eye which might be considered as reportable to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, ... 45
Unusual pupils reported by the home teachers, ... 47
Woolson House, ... 48
Obligations to other agencies, ... 49
Volunteer service, ... 50

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Commission for the Blind.

Charles B. Hayes of Brookline, *Director*, . . . Term ends 1923
Walter B. Snow of Watertown, *Secretary*, . . . Term ends 1921
Mrs. William W. Taff of Brookline, ... Term ends 1920
Edward E. Allen of Watertown, ... Term ends 1923
John P. Reynolds of Boston, ... Term ends 1922
John D. W. Bodfish of Hyannis, ... Term ends 1919

Regular meetings of the Commission are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, at 4 Park Street, Boston.

Telephone, Haymarket 831.

Private branch exchanges connecting central office and the Cambridge workshops, listed under Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Office, Haymarket 831, and Industries, Cambridge 5753.

Agents.

Charles W. Holmes,[1] *Superintendent of Training and Employment for Men.*
Lotta S. Rand,[2] *Superintendent of Training and Employment for Women.*
Henry Copley Greene,[3] *Field Worker for Conservation of Eyesight.*
Florence W. Birchard, *Superintendent of Employment in Competition with the Seeing.*
Ida E. Ridgeway, *Superrisor of Work for Children.*
Edith R. Gale,[4] *Field Worker.*
Mary W. Richardson, *Field Worker.*
Mary M. Slattery,[5] *Field Worker.*
Rose E. Trainor,[6] *Field Worker for Conservation of Eyesight.*
Francis B. Ierardi,[6] *Special Field Worker.*
Fred V. Walsh,[6] *Speeial Field Worker.*
Juliet R. Perrella,[6] *Speeial Field Worker.*

[1] Resigned May 1, 1918.
[2] On leave of absenee since July 22, 1918.
[3] On leave of absenee sinee April 1, 1917.
[4] Resigned Aug. 1, 1918.
[5] Resigned June 29, 1918.
[6] Blind.

James T. Cole, *Superintendent of Industries for Men.*
H. Frances Lewis, *Manager, Woolson House Industries.*
George S. Mansfield, *Sales Agent.*
Helen F. O'Leary, *Accountant.*

I. Central Office.

The central office is located at 4 Park Street, Boston.

Applications may be made at the central office: (1) for information in regard to the various general and special agencies already organized which may be utilized for the benefit of the blind; (2) for home teachers' instruction; (3) for employment; (4) for educational and industrial aid; (5) for the sale of products; (6) for the co-operation in care of children's cases not already provided for by the Nursery for Blind Babies and the Perkins Institution; and (7) for information and co-operation in non-medical work for prevention of blindness and conservation of eyesight.

II. Employment.

There are three general divisions into which the possibilities of employment of the blind naturally fall: (1) among the seeing, either along professional lines, in offices, in shops or otherwise; (2) in shops for the blind; (3) in home industries or individual occupations.

Applications for employment will be carefully considered and every effort made to secure suitable work for the applicant. In the first case, personal effort of one of the Commission's representatives will be made on behalf of the applicant. In the second, a position will be secured when possible in some workshop for the blind. In the third, suitable training may be provided by the Commission, at its discretion and under such conditions as it shall determine. (See "Shop Schools and Industrial Classes.")

III. Salesroom for Home and Shop Products of Blind Labor, 4 Park Street, Boston.

All articles made in the home must be submitted for inspection and must come up to reasonable standards as regards style and workmanship. Original applications for the consignment of home work should be made at the Commission's office.

Florence E. Cummings, *Manager, Salesroom.*

IV. Cambridge Industries.

James T. Cole, *Superintendent.*
Marie H. Manseau, *Clerk.*

Cambridge Rug and "Wundermop" Shop, 686 Massachusetts Avenue, (Central Square).

HUBERT DURDLE, *Manager.*
K. R. SMITH,[1] *Foreman, Mop Shop.*
JOHN PENDERGAST,[1] *Mop Agent.*

Broom and Basket Shop, 13 Brookline Street, Cambridge.

F. J. PIPER, *Manager.*
L. W. KILBOURN,[1] *Clerk.*
MICHAEL E. MITCHELL, *Foreman, Broom Shop.*
WILLIAM A. WOJCIK, *Foreman, Basket Shop.*
EDWIN D. STICKNEY,[1] *Canvasser.*

V. WOOLSON HOUSE INDUSTRIES.

Woolson House Industries for Women, 277 Harvard Street (corner of Inman). Hand-weaving, chair reseating, etc.

H. FRANCES LEWIS, *Manager.*
ELEANOR YANCEY, *Assistant.*

VI. "M. C. B." SHOPS.

Pittsfield. — 30 Eagle Street.

WILLIAM FOLEY,[1] *Managing Foreman.*
NELSON A. FOOT, *Clerical Assistant.*

Lowell. — 159 Moody Street.

CHARLES P. LITTLEHALE, *Manager.*
HENRY G. BURKE,[1] *Foreman.*

Worcester. — 33 Highland Street.

M. D. FITZGERALD, *Manager.*
DANIEL SCOTT,[1] *Foreman.*

Fall River. — 19 Stafford Road.

JOSEPH A. DENNIS, *Manager.*
LAWRENCE P. MANNIX,[1] *Foreman.*

Chair reseating and broom making are the chief industries of these four shops, which employ only men.

[1] Blind or partially blind workers.

VII. Shop Schools and Industrial Classes.

Instruction in chair seating and broom making is given to a limited number of pupils, with a view to home or shop employment in these industries; also in rug, mop, broom making, willow-ware making and in art fabric weaving, as vacancies occur in the various workshops and as the business expands.

VIII. State Home Teachers.

John Vars.[1]
Lillian R. Garside.[1]
Edward E. Schuerer.[1]
Mary E. Roberts.[1]
Mary F. Grieve.[1]

[1] Blind or partially blind workers.

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable the Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN: — The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind begs leave to submit the following report covering the fiscal year ended Nov. 30, 1918, under the act creating it (chapter 385, Acts of 1906) and the act reorganizing it (chapter 266, General Acts of 1918). The Commission is charged with the duty of seeking out and registering new cases of blindness; of following up cases already known; of furthering measures to prevent blindness; of giving specialized education and promoting the efficiency and happiness of blind men and women.

The work of the Commission for the Blind during the past year has shared the difficulties which the war has laid upon all fields of public endeavor. Part of the sympathies and the financial support of the public have been very properly diverted into other channels. The purses of the American people have been drained to meet the extraordinary demands of war relief organizations, and it was to be expected that the interest and support that was usually granted would sink to a minimum. There was one thing, however, which, though a disadvantage in prosecuting our work, nevertheless has been of assistance in focussing the attention of the average man on the work that is being done among the blind of this State. We refer to the problem of the blinded soldier. The return of about 35 American soldiers from the front has caused many to reflect on the general question of the education of the blind.

The public has begun to realize that there is a problem, and that *is* a great gain. But the immediate practical result of the return of the blinded soldier has been the loss of many of our helpers. All of the blinded soldiers and sailors go to Evergreen, United States Army General Hospital No. 7, in Baltimore, where they are trained. After they are discharged their training is continued at the Red Cross Institute for the Blind in Baltimore, or under the direction of the Federal Board for

Vocational Education. There has been a great demand for experienced workers for the blind at that center, with the result that a proportion of our volunteer help has been drawn off during the last few months of the year.

Here in Massachusetts we have tried to make the blind feel that they are, so to speak, organic with the Commission; that the Commission is working for them; and that they should be interested in the Commission. To this end the Commission has endeavored to speak the same social language and to think the same thoughts as the blind, and to see things from the blind man's point of view.

Our position this year has been complicated by the reorganization of the Commission. In accordance with a prevailing tendency in public administration, the former Commission has been superseded by a new commission, of which the executive head, Mr. Charles B. Hayes, is now a member. Three members of the former Commission, Mrs. Agnes C. Taff, Mr. Edward E. Allen and Mr. Walter B. Snow, were appointed as associate members of the present Commission, to serve for the remainder of their respective terms, and in addition, Mr. John P. Reynolds was appointed for the four-year term, and Mr. John D. W. Bodfish was appointed for the one-year term.

A supplemental report by the members of the former Commission is issued as a special report, and the act creating the present Commission will be found in the Appendix.

CHANGE OF LOCATION.

We have been obliged to change the location of the salesroom and executive offices. The fact that both salesroom and offices had to be provided for made the task of housing the Commission somewhat difficult. We were, fortunately, able to secure adequate quarters next door.

CHANGE OF STAFF.

The Commission reports the resignation of Mr. Charles W. Holmes, superintendent of employment for men. Since his resignation Mr. Holmes' duties have been combined with those of the director and superintendent of industries for men.

At the time of the Halifax disaster Massachusetts felt that it must do something to meet the emergency, and the Commission lent Miss Lotta S. Rand for three months to a committee of the American Red Cross in order to organize relief for those newly blinded by the explosion and to make a study of their further needs. Upon her return a year's leave of absence was granted her to serve overseas.

The Commission this year appointed to its staff five totally blind workers. The policy was put into execution on a trial basis, to determine whether the blind social worker could produce equal results with the seeing. The experiment has been so successful that we may call attention to the principle involved.

There exists among the blind a bond of sympathy which others sometimes fail to realize; therefore there are reasons why blind persons with innate qualities for social work should be able to carry on some parts of our program even more satisfactorily than seeing workers. Since the Commission for the Blind exists for the sake of the blind it is its policy to employ the blind as its workers whenever it can effectively do so.

This policy has been executed in the typewriting department, where a dictaphone has made possible the employment of a blind typist. The bulk of the correspondence has been written by a blind operator, and each communication reads, "This letter was transcribed from the dictaphone by a blind stenographer," — a medium of advertising which has brought about a healthy interest in the work, and which has served as a splendid instrument for the education of the seeing public.

Owing to the service of our volunteer staff, the cost of guiding these blind workers has been small. The time will probably come when these workers will need permanent guides, since it would seem that supplying eyes for those who cannot see is a legitimate expense for the State to bear.

We have undertaken to solve the problem of the foreign blind by dealing with them through those who speak their own language. One of our partially blind workers reports a case in point, which will be found in the Appendix.

THE SURVEY OF THE BLIND IN THREE COUNTIES.

It has been a function of the Commission from its inception to maintain a register of the blind in the State, and such a register is undeniably essential for the purposes of the work. In order to have an intelligent and comprehensive grasp of our problem it is imperative that we know the needs and number of the blind as they exist to-day.

The method adopted is as follows: letters are sent to the chairman of the overseers of the poor, to the chairman of the board of assessors, to all the oculists and the local charity organizations, asking them to forward to the Commission the names and addresses of any blind or partially blind recorded with them. Names received by this means, with those already in the register, and those entered in the State census of 1915, are submitted to a careful scrutiny and investigation. The ultimate object of the work is to determine the educational, industrial, financial and social status of the individual, and to give to that individual a knowledge of the Commission's purpose.

The entire survey was made by three blind workers, and the result is proof of their peculiar adaptation for this phase of the Commission's work, of which we have spoken above.

A striking fact revealed by the survey is that persons have been blind for years without having known of the existence of the Commission. In one case a woman said, "How is it I have been blind for nineteen years and have never known of home teaching?"

Survey of Worcester, Bristol and Norfolk Counties.

Register of the blind, before investigation,	1,992	
1915 census cases (not registered),	282	
New cases, reported during the investigation,	141	
		2,415
Number who have died,	777	
Number found to be not blind,	242	
Number who have moved out of town,	225	
Unable to locate,	196	
Duplicate names,	32	
		1,472
Cases of blind and seriously defective sight located,		943

Adults.

Independent means,	62		
Self-supporting,	182		
Housewife,	43		
Receiving pension,	26		
In sanatarium,	2		
In homes for the aged,	29		
	—	344	
Partially self-supporting,	112		
Partially dependent upon outdoor aid,	10		
	—	122	
Dependent upon friends and relatives,	200		
Inmate of almshouse,	56		
Inmate of insane hospital,	48		
Mendicant,	2		
	—	306	
		772	

Children.

Attending Perkins Institution,	36		
Pending Perkins Institution,	19		
Attending Blind Babies Nursery,	2		
Attending other institutions,	9		
Pending Blind Babies Nursery,	1		
Attending public school with difficulty,	23		
Unable to attend school for various reasons,	26		
Recommended for sight-saving class,	22		
Attending sight-saving class,	25		
Inmates of Massachusetts School for the Feeble-minded,	8		
	—	171	
			943
Blind,			590
Partially blind,			256
Defective sight,			97
			943
Towns,			100
Cities,			8
			108

Before investigation, cases of blindness,	2,274	
Number died, not blind, etc.,	1,472	
		802
New cases, reported during the investigation,		141
After investigation, cases of blindness,		[1]943
Total population of the three counties (1915 census),		979,574
Before investigation, per cent. of blindness of total population,		.0023
After investigation, per cent. of blindness of total population,		.0009
In need of relief,		476

Seven Cities in Worcester and Bristol Counties.

Cases traced to new addresses,	171
Cases never before visited by Commission,	279

The following cases were referred to us by the survey: —

A young man of twenty-four years became blind in December, 1917. After being discharged from the City Hospital he was sent to the city almshouse, and there our agent found him. At first he appeared uninterested in all that was said to him, but when he learned that the agent was himself blind, he became thoroughly awakened, and before the interview ended he wanted a chance to become an apprentice in the Cambridge shop. This opportunity was afforded, and at the end of two weeks he was on the pay roll and has now started a bank account.

A lad of nineteen was referred to the Commission by the 1915 census. He had never been visited before, and our agent discovered the following facts concerning him: he came to this country at the age of fourteen, but had never been afforded the opportunity of an education. The agent aroused the interest of the young man's parents, and applied for his admittance at Perkins Institution, to which he was readily admitted, and is now enjoying the privilege of a belated education. Instead of his becoming a possible public charge, he is offered the chance to fit himself for his part in the work of the world, and to become a useful citizen.

The survey revealed the pitiable plight of a boy of twelve, who, since the age of three months, had been totally blind in the right eye, and had had very little vision in the left. Struggling along as a listener at a private school, he was only in the second grade, and gave every appearance of permanent backwardness. Investigation showed that his mother, a well-meaning woman, had purposely kept him from school until such time as the younger boy could accompany him. To-day he is in the Perkins Kindergarten, and is reported to be a bright pupil. There are opportunities ahead for him to learn an industry that will materially assist in making him self-supporting.

[1] A decrease of 58½ per cent.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

Relief.

It is to be remembered that many a blind man is poor because of his infirmity and of some other disability, such as old age or disease. He earns all that he can with his hands, which must also serve as eyes. Clearly there must be many cases where additional disabilities would place the blind just over the border line separating economic dependence from independence, and in these cases there is but one thing that will help, — financial assistance, and here comes the incompleteness in the present system. As things stand, the Commission has at its disposal no funds which can be used for purposes of relief, and so where the need is greatest it is powerless to help. There are approximately 3,456 cases of blindness, and of these 1,773 are in need of relief. There is no home in the State for disabled blind, and the homes that exist for the seeing will rarely admit such people, so those who are without means and cannot earn their living have before them the terrible alternative of begging in the streets or going into the almshouse. It is time that this was remedied. We must not bear the reproach that these unfortunates among us, who by no fault of their own are unable to earn their bread, are faced with the choice to beg or starve.

This is not charity, it is elementary justice, and the State owes it to the citizens at large to remove a blot which is none the less dark because few know of it. The Commission has recommended legislation to meet this condition.

Home Teaching.

The increase in the appropriation for instruction of the adult blind in their homes is asked that the salaries of five teachers may be increased to $900 per year each, on June 1, 1919. The Commission has recommended legislation to meet this.

Sight-saving Classes for Children.

There is a group of about 500 children in Massachusetts who are in danger of becoming a burden to the community when they reach industrial age because proper and adequate methods

of education are not provided. Our government deals with the serious economic impediment of illiteracy through compulsory education. The normal child is adequately cared for in our public day schools, and certain provision is made for those of subnormal mentality, for the deaf and for the blind. There are children not blind enough to require training by the touch method in a school for the blind, whose amount of eyesight is so limited that any education they now gain is at the expense of their eyesight, their nervous system and their general health. We refer particularly to those children born with malformation of the eye, those with scars over the pupillary area resulting from inflammatory disorders, which are aggravated by eye-strain, and those with progressive near-sight, — a condition which indicates the minimum amount of close work in order to prevent further decrease of vision or even ultimate blindness.

A special class for this type of child was opened in April, 1913, under the Boston school board, with the co-operation of Perkins Institution on recommendation of the Commission for the Blind. There are now 10 such classes in the State, with an enrollment of 113 children in cities which represent an elementary school membership of 148,386 pupils.

The cost of education in these classes is increased by reason of the need for special equipment representing: —

1. Adjustable desks which save the children from the bending-over position, and enable them to catch the light at the most advantageous angle.
2. Specially prepared textbooks with large type (24-point type in favor).
3. Large soft lead pencils and dull-finished paper employed in place of pen and ink work. Adequate blackboard facilities.
4. Handwork to train the fingers to help relieve eyestrain.
5. Typewriting facilities for the older pupils.

These classes are ungraded, and one teacher can manage from 10 to 15 children, according to the scope of grades represented. The instruction is necessarily individual.

Three of the existing classes are not adequately equipped with suitable working material. One class is on the verge of disbanding because the city cannot afford the salary to a teacher caring for so small a group. The need in this city is particularly great.

We suggest that the $10,000 asked for be used as follows: —

To help towards the increased expense of conducting the 10 existing sight-saving classes, $500 each,	$5,000 00
To establish 6 new sight-saving classes, $750 each ($250 for equipment),	4,500 00
To complete equipment in existing classes,	500 00
	$10,000 00

The proposed new classes are in Revere, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, Chelsea and Newton. There are 57 candidates.

A fairly conservative estimate is that about 1 child in every 1,000 requires the methods of the sight-saving class.

Total enrollment in elementary schools of the State, 1917–18,	522,088
Average membership,	470,912
Requiring sight-saving class (approximately),	500
Average cost per capita in day schools of Massachusetts, 1917–18,	$46 82
Average cost per capita in Perkins Institution (Massachusetts School for the Blind), 1916–17,	$502 94
Average cost per capita of children in sight-saving classes not obtainable but estimated,	$100 00

Ohio makes a yearly allowance of $200 per capita for the education of this group, but this amount also supplies certain vocational training which we are not planning for at present. Without doubt a number of children could be cared for in sight-saving classes who otherwise would be obliged to receive their education at a school for the blind, and many now struggling along with sighted children could be saved from detrimental results to sight and health.

Should not the State, which makes education compulsory, share in the responsibility of making its advantages accessible for all?

The Commission has recommended legislation to meet this situation.

CHILDREN.

Work with our children during the past year embraced the following groups: —

Children known in other years,	400
Newly referred children,	182
Newly referred children not registered because vision was brought up to normal with glasses and prognosis was good,	171
Total,	753

In the registered cases the following degrees of low vision were found: —

Total blindness,	54
Partial blindness (perception of light and shadow, but unable to read large print),	60
Seriously defective eyesight (inability to read ordinary textbook print),	[1] 397
Old cases moved out of State,	12
Old cases unable to locate,	40
Old cases died,	19

Sources from which the registered new cases were referred were as follows: —

Schools,	78
Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary,	43
State, city and town authorities,	32
Private persons,	9
Other agencies,	20
Total,	182

State, City and Town Authorities.

The law requires the reporting "in writing over the doctor's own signature" of all cases of ophthalmia neonatorum (babies' sore eyes) to the local health authorities, who are directed to "take such immediate action as it may deem necessary in order that blindness may be prevented." This reporting should be more carefully carried out, as verbal statements lead to careless

[1] Of these, 116 were restored to fair vision by medical, surgical and educational care after considerable time.

methods too often paid for by damaged eyesight or even blindness. Greater emphasis should be placed upon the responsibility of local health authorities in promptly securing the expert services of ophthalmologist and nurse as a reasonable precaution against loss of eyesight. Cleanliness, the greatest factor in checking the rapid, destructive progress of this infection, is obtained through proper irrigation of the conjunctival sac, and requires the services of the nurse with experience in eye work to efficiently manipulate the stiff, swollen lids and avoid injury to the delicate cornea. Our public health nurses should be trained in the care and experienced in the handling of the eye, or, better still, specially trained eye nurses to care for all cases (infants and adults) of suppurative conjunctivitis in the larger centers would undoubtedly prove of humane and economic value in the work of eliminating blindness from this cause.

Reports from the State census are bringing to light many important cases of blind and low-visioned children not formerly registered, where real service has been rendered. An illustrative case will be found in the Appendix.

Schools.

The compulsory eye test brings within our reach, at one of the most important periods in their careers, all children with low vision in our public schools, and many such are referred to the Commission (1) after failure of teacher and school nurse to get parents to secure eye examination, and (2) as candidates for conservation of vision classes.

During the past year special effort has been made to have for our work with children only those agents sufficiently equipped with eye knowledge to simply and impressively explain the significance of near-sight, far-sight, astigmatism, congenital cataracts, corneal scars, active corneal conditions, congenital malformations, etc. Lack of co-operation usually means lack of understanding.

Myopia, or Near-Sight, if Neglected can cause Partial Blindness.

The school eye test discovers the child, and carefully fitted concave lenses direct the rays of light to a focus on the retina, relieving the eye-strain which otherwise might cause serious inflammation and lead to trouble for which there is no remedy.

Classes for Conservation of Vision in Our Public Schools.

There have been four new classes opened during the past year. At present Massachusetts has classes in the following cities: —

	Classes.	Pupils.
Boston,	5 (2 new)	58
New Bedford,	2 (1 new)	26
Cambridge,	1	10
Lynn,	1	10
Worcester,	1 (new)	9
	10	113

Care has been taken to have those children whose visual need is greatest receive the advantages offered by these classes. Local school boards have shown wisdom in the appointment of teachers with unbounded resourcefulness, enthusiasm and real human kindness. Every teacher is working out her own particular problem of instructing her children in the most impressive way without taxing their eyesight. The laws which establish compulsory schooling testify to the fact that our State recognizes *illiteracy* as a serious social menace. Provision has been made for the education of the seeing and of the blind child, but there are those — probably 1 in every 1,000 — who are struggling along with normally sighted children to the detriment of their eyesight and their general health. Only five cities in Massachusetts are providing for these children.

Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Through this institution medical and surgical care has been provided for about 500 of our children. The thoughtful cooperation and courtesy of the executives, medical staff, social service department and employees has largely contributed toward the success of our endeavors in the field of saving eyesight. An agent has been at the Eye and Ear Infirmary on two mornings weekly throughout the year.

Some Results.

	Cases.
Children for whom special education was obtained through Perkins Institution, sight-saving classes, private tuition and supervision in schools and by State home teachers,	186
Medical, educational or occupational advice given to,	277
Co-operation with children's societies and various agencies,	157
Some special form of relief secured for,	21
A small fund for glasses, granted through the permanent charity fund, has helped,	67

In our children's work 98 cities and towns have been visited and information and advice circulated.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

As part of its work on the prevention of blindness the Commission has this year placed before the public facts covering the common causes of needless blindness; preventive and remedial measures; resources of the Commonwealth for helping the blind; and essential matters that teachers should know regarding the education and work of the blind.

For this important and significant endeavor the Commission needed a speaker of superior education and intellectual attainment, one who, having had sight and lost it, had learned how to be blind. Miss Rose E. Trainor of Worcester was found to be the most suitable person for this work.

Miss Trainor was seventeen years old and a student in Worcester when she lost her sight. In 1909 she graduated from Perkins Institution for the Blind, and two years later, from the North Adams State Normal School; in addition to this, she was a special student for one year at Clark University. Thus she has worked with both blind and seeing children, and is profoundly interested in the welfare of her fellow blind. Miss Trainor prepared a series of lectures on five different subjects, which, in the opinion of the Commission, cover the main conditions, facts and circumstances it desired to have emphasized before the public. These lectures were given under the auspices of the Commission 42 times, and in 16 cities, before schools, patriotic organizations, teachers' associations and women's clubs.

Approximately 4,500 people were reached, and much publicity and press comment resulted. In addition, the Commission held two exhibits in connection with child welfare week in Lynn and Waltham.

HOME TEACHING.

The grant of an increased appropriation of $1,500 for the work of State home teaching for the adult blind of Massachusetts has been amply justified by the concrete results of the past year. An invaluable acquisition has been afforded thereby, namely, the addition of two of our former part-time teachers to our regular full-time staff.

It may be well to portray the vital character of this phase of our work by the citation of some interesting cases which have come under recent observation which will be found in the Appendix.

Statistics of the Home Teaching Department, Dec. 1, 1917, to Nov. 30, 1918.

Pupil's Statistics.

Number of pupils enrolled Nov. 1, 1917,	109
Number of new cases taken on during the time,	110
Number of old pupils returning for more help,	55
Total enrollment,	274
Number of pupils finishing work,	108
Amount of money earned by pupils during year,	$799 04

Teacher's Statistics.

Number of calls made,	1,962
Number of lessons given,	2,433
Number of letters written,	784
Number of cards written,	527
Number of hours spent in preparation,	1,990
Number of hours given to teaching,	2,846
Number of hours devoted to travel,	3,738
Number of miles traveled,	32,670

SALESMANSHIP COURSE.

In January of this year a plan was formulated for the opening of a class in advertising and salesmanship at the Thomas Park House. Prof. Harold Whitehead of Boston University was found to be a most able instructor. He gave gratuitously

to a class of fifteen a most enlightening and inspiring course of lectures on "Advertising and Salesmanship." Special stress was laid on the possibilities that these fields hold for blind people, and Professor Whitehead encouraged the idea of a correspondence course for their special use. The results were so excellent that it is planned to have the class continue at Boston University this year. Professor Whitehead is now giving a similar course to our American blind soldiers who are being reeducated at the Red Cross Institute for the Blind in Baltimore, Md.

EMPLOYMENT IN SUBSIDIZED SHOPS.

Cambridge Industries.

Broom Department.

Mr. Curado having resigned his position as manager of the broom department, we secured the services of Mr. Frank Piper, a citizen of Massachusetts who has had thirty years' experience in the broom industry. Effort is being made to eliminate poor construction and arrangement of machinery, and to adjust the different processes of industry so as to add to the efficiency of the blind workman. For the first six months of the year the broom industry met with unusually good business. In September about one-half the force was taken ill with influenza, and for two weeks the work was crippled.

Rug Department.

The rug business has largely reverted to the hall and bedroom type in which we carry the same artistic colorings that we did in the Cambridge rugs. We have secured from several large shirt factories the output of their waste strippings, which come about one inch wide and in long lengths. These are balled up by our operatives, skeined and dyed attractive shades. The demand for these rugs has been good, although conditions brought on by the war have retarded the development in this department.

Wundermop Shop.

The Wundermop shop has been rushed all through the year, and at all times we have been several hundred mops behind in our orders, as a large part of the output has gone to the government.

Dowel Shop.

A new development this year has been the dowel shop. Boards are sawed into squares and run through a dowel machine, and from there they go through the finishing process of sandpapering and polishing. Dowels of a high polish are made by applying wax to the dowel on high-speed lathes. There has been a good demand for our products from the government. We also supply our own mop shop with the required handles for the Wundermops.

Basket Shop.

The greater part of the year we have been filling an order for several hundred pork baskets for a local wholesale house. Another order was executed for wool skips, and kept one operative busy several months at good wages. We have four acres of fine willow under cultivation which have helped greatly during the scarcity of raw material. When harvesting the willow we were able to employ outside blind men for stripping the bark. The cultivating of the willow has been done by partially blind men.

Rattan Department.

The rattan department is an exceptionally good industry for men who are beyond the age of learning the more skilled trades. The process includes cutting long strips of rattan and sorting into required lengths for the broom trade.

Rise of Wages.

The custom of putting the blind man on a footing of absolute equality, and of giving the blind manufacturer a maximum of compensation, has received considerable thought. Every blind man in the shops has had his wages raised as a direct consequence.

Until the Commission secures its own building, we can never have model workshops; nor can we expect the highest efficiency from each blind man, decrease appreciably the overhead charges and expand the industries. At the present time the Cambridge industries are in four different localities. To successfully head up the work, therefore, one central building is essential.

Dowel shop, Cambridge. Making dowels.

Fall River shop. Broom manufacturing.

Local Shops.

It has been the belief of the Commission this year that the same individual who purchases materials for the Cambridge shops should also purchase for the four local shops. It was also thought best to have one man in charge of all industries throughout the State; therefore Mr. James T. Cole, who is superintendent of the Cambridge industries for men, was given the superintendency of the shops in Fall River, Worcester, Lowell and Pittsfield. The general tendency of all these changes has been toward concentration of administration, — a policy which we believe will combine a maximum of efficiency with a minimum of expense.

Worcester Shop.

It was found necessary this year to find better and more adequate quarters for the workshop for the blind in Worcester. Through the courtesy and co-operation of Mr. Henry G. Whitcomb and the trustees of the Memorial Home for Blind Women, the garage connected with the Whitcomb estate, on Harvard and Highland streets, was converted into a workshop. The chief industry is chair caning. Since this move was made the work has grown appreciably. The general health of the men has been improved. This shop affords abundant light and fresh air, and the men are showing a much finer application to their work. At the expiration of the survey of Worcester County only three men were found eligible for this shop.

Fall River Shop.

The Fall River shop has moved from Borden Street, which was much too crowded, to better quarters on Stafford Road, one of the finest parts of the city. The shop can now expand, and we believe there should be an increase in business.

Lowell Shop.

The Lowell shop has remained in the same quarters at 159 Moody Street, and has had plenty of work throughout the year. Chair caning has constituted a large part of the work, but broom making is now being installed, and the product should supply the Lowell trade.

Pittsfield Shop.

We have deemed it advisable to train our own broom makers in Pittsfield rather than to send them outside the State for training which we can give at less expense; therefore the Pittsfield shop has been enlarged to meet this need.

Woolson House Industries.

Work has been plentiful in the caning department of the Woolson House industries, in spite of generally unsettled conditions and increased cost of materials. These same conditions, however, have rather seriously affected art fabric sales. This autumn art fabrics were placed on exhibition at the Chicago Exhibition of Applied Arts. The worker on braided rugs is busy on two rather remarkable ones (9 by 16), which are for the Bridgewater Normal School, and there are orders ahead that will keep her busy for some months. The wages of all workers have been increased. Rates for regular shop work range from $5 to $10, and on occasion have risen to $12 per week. During the past year five apprentices have been placed for training at the shop. One of these — a young woman thirty-five years of age, blind from early girlhood, uneducated and unskilled — never believed that a sightless person could be trained, but when she realized what she herself had accomplished at the Woolson House she exclaimed, "It is like Fairyland!"

Recreation is provided in various ways. Last summer the shop workers were taken on an automobile picnic, and a merrier crowd of young women could hardly be seen anywhere. When the peace celebrations were held, our girls had their share in the fun. A car was loaned, and they went to Boston where they joined in the festivities.

Truly, as Sir Frederick Fraser said, "It is only the uneducated blind who are really blind."

The report on the Woolson House by Miss Sarah A. Drew, acting chairman of the house committee, will be found in the Appendix.

EMPLOYMENT.

The big aim of the Commission is to establish in the mind of every blind person in the State the idea that the name "Massachusetts Commission for the Blind" stands for "Opportunity!"

It typifies, so to speak, a "recall to life," and stands ready not only to point but *provide* "the means," by instruction and placement in remedial and remunerative occupation. There is, however, a parallel point that must be forcibly driven home; coincident with the Commission's desire to fulfill its obligations there must exist on the part of the blind person a determined ambition to "make good," otherwise it is impossible for the Commission to make a person succeed. There are a number of men now in our shops who, by reason of age or other infirmities, receive proportionately more than they produce. This is always undesirable unless there exists the possibility that such disproportionate earning will be of short duration. This phase of the industrial situation naturally reverts to the aforementioned "relief measure," and the conclusion is that with relief provided for the handicapped, there will be greater scope for the satisfactory placement of industrious and competent workers.

SALESROOM.

The report from our salesroom has been gratifying in spite of adverse conditions induced by war interests, the influenza epidemic, and change of Commission headquarters. Lecture work, combined with outside exhibitions held under the auspices of women's clubs, and sales given at hotels and summer resorts have been successful channels for the advertisement and disposition of our handwork.

EMPLOYMENT IN COMPETITION WITH THE SEEING.

A cardinal point in the effort of the Commission has been to make the blind man feel that he may become financially independent, if he is willing to go through the training necessary for the requisite technical dexterity. The superintendent of employment in competition with the seeing, during the past year, visited 100 factories, and personally asked the managers for their unbiased opinions. The concerns visited included, among others, leather, paper, envelope, corset, drug, glue, ammunition, shoe, candy and various sorts of machine shops, and at every one of these inquiries were made as to whether processes were employed which a blind person might perform with a reasonable chance for success. As a direct result 53 blind workers

were placed in office or other positions, and 49 made good, — a percentage of over 90. This proportion is greater than would be expected of ordinary seeing workers, and is all the more striking when it is known that of the four who did not make good, two were obliged to resign because of ill health, one left because he was constitutionally unable to stick to any job, and the other decided that this particular occupation was too hazardous for a blind man. There is no doubt that for this last man can be found work of another and more favorable sort, so we have the remarkable record that in all these cases not one individual failed because of his handicap. Moreover, each of these blind persons received money for actual services rendered. The employers were more than satisfied with the quality of their output, and their influence in the shops was regarded as most wholesome. The time is perhaps coming when the employer will ask for blind workmen, because of the educational value that their quiet industry and calm patience creates in a shop. Of course, on account of the labor shortage, the past year was an exceptionally favorable one for the experiment, but this consideration is not enough to explain the exceptional success of the project, for this was due to the inherent qualities of the blind employees, who gain in other ways what they lose in sight, and more especially was it due to the unfailing work of the superintendent, Miss Florence W. Birchard.

Some details of the kind of work provided will perhaps be of interest at this point.

Seven sightless girls were placed in office positions as dictaphone operators, and are successfully holding their places. Four positions were found in housework, tuning secured for four piano tuners, outside work secured for two men with partial sight, and guide work given three. Positions were found and offered to 13 people who had asked for help in finding employment, but who refused to work for various reasons, — illness, unwillingness to go into factory work, uncleanliness or better positions elsewhere. Help along industrial lines, training, introductions to business men, music reading to blind teachers, typewriting and dictaphone lessons, guides furnished for securing trade, or equipment for canvassing were given to 24 people.

The superintendent of employment was in touch during the

Working in competition with the seeing. Dictaphone operator, United Shoe Machinery Company, Boston.

year with 175 people for various sorts of help in her department.

The actual expense for training and guides for the 33 placements has been $593.32. Of this, $430.32 was spent for intensive training of two dictaphone operators, and included all expenses for several months. This made the actual expense for 51 people $163 for the entire year. These people have earned $9,050 in actual wages, and a greater number have worked only for the summer or since October. Only seven have been employed for the whole twelve months, as the others worked for three months of summer vacation, or started to work in the fall.

INDUSTRIAL SUMMARY.

The following industrial summary gives a relative idea of the growth of the work and the cash returns to the blind: —

Year.	State Appropriation.	Number benefited.	Number given Industrial Training.[1]	Number benefited by Home Teaching.[1]	Number employed regularly in Commission's Shops.[2]	Earnings of Blind in Commission's Shops (Salesroom and Staff).	Total Sales.
1906–07, . . .	$40,000 00[3]	464	57	–	68	$8,353 82	$12,612 97
1907–08, . . .	40,000 00	392	77	–	84	13,769 98	18,754 79
1908–09, . . .	45,000 00	380	40	–	86	19,502 52	34,669 40
1909–10, . . .	45,000 00	400	39	–	96	25,050 53	53,029 50
1910–11, . . .	50,000 00	464	42	–	90[4]	29,544 92	67,331 98
1911–12, . . .	57,781 04	584	28	–	99	35,183 17	54,592 56[5]
1912–13, . . .	65,000 00	600	26	–	112	40,543 33	55,556 24
1913–14, . . .	67,000 00	750	20	–	113	42,205 55	50,737 43
1914–15, . . .	67,005 45[6]	800	22	–	113	45,010 04	75,671 06
1915–16, . . .	71,210 23	1,043	32	–	132	50,350 82	88,692 18
1916–17, . . .	91,670 36	1,046	18	246	143	63,108 40[7]	161,773 72[8]
1917–18, . . .	108,081 20	2,912	87	274	158	76,181 37	215,845 29

[1] Number trained is determined largely by prospects for employment under supervision, and is no indication of number needing training.

[2] Part-time workers have been averaged for full time and added.

[3] State appropriation July to Nov. 30, 1906, amount to $20,000.

[4] Decrease due to change in plan of using blind agent.

[5] Actually an increase, since brooms have been transferred to general account, and material manufactured that was not purchased.

[6] Not including appropriation for instruction of adult blind in their homes.

[7] Including salaries paid to State home teachers.

[8] Receipts at local shops included in this figure.

FINANCIAL REPORT.

Following is the financial report of the expenditure of the appropriation for general expenses, the receipts and expenditures of the industries (the Cambridge shops and salesroom), and the expenditure of the appropriation for the instruction of adult blind in their homes. The total of appropriations for the year ending Nov. 30, 1918, was $108,081.20. Through these appropriations the blind were enabled during this period to earn $76,181.37.

Disbursements Dec. 1, 1917, to Nov. 30, 1918, from Appropriation for General Expenses.

Items.	Total.	Administration.	General Industrial and Educational Aid.	Pittsfield Shop.	Lowell Shop.	Worcester Shop.	Fall River Shop.
Salaries and wages: —							
Seeing,	$13,857 04	$11,343 92	–	$478 26	$265 00	$259 60	$1,510 26
Blind,	18,126 69	4,313 59	$319 26	3,649 64	3,310 83	1,749 13	4,784 24
Bonus to blind,	1,938 28	–	1,938 28	–	–	–	–
Merchandise and tools furnished,	27,542 22	–	570 79	8,012 53	2,175 18	2,659 86	14,123 86
Equipment,	1,347 73	300 84	–	616 64	193 25	87 00	150 00
Tuition in special schools,	1,224 67	–	1,224 67	–	–	–	–
Rent (including heat, light, etc.),	4,869 57	2,734 29	–	734 77	526 34	299 29	574 88
Services of guides,	5,272 05	563 56	4,708 49	–	–	–	–
Board of apprentices and pupils,	3,053 29	–	3,053 29	–	–	–	–
Travel,	2,376 64	2,037 48	339 16	–	–	–	–
Items of general expense,	6,471 91	2,004 17	19 78	1,378 69	1,069 31	951 40	1,048 56
	$86,080 09	$23,297 85	$12,173 72	$14,870 53	$7,539 91	$6,006 28	$22,191 80
Less refunds on equipment,	137 50	–	102 50	–	–	35 00	–
	$85,942 59	$23,297 85	$12,071 22	$14,870 53	$7,539 91	$5,971 28	$22,191 80
Less amounts paid from revenue,	35,469 11	–	–	10,571 35	4,009 20	3,668 36	17,220 20
Total,	$50,473 48	$23,297 85	$12,071 22	$4,299 18	$3,530 71	$2,302 92	$4,971 60

Home Work Department.

Disbursements.		*Receipts.*	
Merchandise purchased,	$1,068 29	Home work stock, special sales,	$530 77
Wages to blind in their homes,	716 40	Home work stock, salesroom,	1,450 45
Wages to seeing,	2 43	Home work stock consignments, special sales,	326 12
Commissions to blind,	2 76	Home work consignments, special sales,	528 34
Payments to blind consignors,	793 49	Commission on Hineks dolls,	2 20
Items of general expense,	251 43		$2,837 88
	$2,834 80		

Revenue in Local Shops.

Dec. 1, 1917, to Nov. 30, 1918.

Pittsfield shop,	$10,858 81
Lowell shop,	4,662 24
Worcester shop,	3,790 68
Fall River shop,	17,456 96
	$36,768 69

Industrial Department.

RECEIPTS.

Appropriation from State,		$50,000 00
Income from finished products,		168,287 00
Income from chair reseating,		2,139 16
Income from rattan (cut),		5,814 76
Income from sales of materials,		49 24
Samples distributed for advertising,		114 52
Commission on dolls sold,		3 20
Sales of equipment,		117 32
Interest on bank deposits,		90 46
		$226,615 66

DISBURSEMENTS.

Merchandise purchased,		$134,595 33
Purchases for equipment,		1,810 50
Blind labor on goods manufactured,		38,504 33
Seeing labor on goods manufactured,		4,535 26
		$179,445 42

General Operating Expenses.

To blind: —			
General operating and janitor work,		$9,237 50	
Commissions and royalties,		3,201 92	
		$12,439 42	
To seeing: —			
General supervision, accounting, etc.,		16,771 31	
Rent,		8,219 25	
Incidental expenses: —			
Supplies,	$3,081 07		
Printing,	436 88		
Travel,	1,279 52		
Telephone,	68		
Equipment expense,	1,276 73		
Advertising,	209 55		
Designing,	38 30		
Extra cleaning,	131 55		
Express and teaming,	6,839 05		
Laundry,	39 82		
Postage,	269 82		
Power,	689 50		
Repairs and improvements,	744 13		
Sundries,	108 44		
		15,145 04	
General telephone service,		580 77	
			53,155 79
			$232,601 21
Increase in inventories,		$2,004 43	
Increase in equipment,		856 76	
			2,861 19
			$229,740 02

ASSETS.

Cash,		$2,486 28
Accounts receivable: —		
General,	$19,409 95	
Salesroom,	19 71	
Old salesroom account,	68 20	
Adjustment schedule,	66 72	
Special,	104 50	
		19,669 08
Inventories: —		
Broom shop,	$8,781 06	
Dish mop,	386 15	
Dowel shop,	1,821 38	
Mop shop,	5,056 24	
Oriental rug,	40 00	
Rug shop,	13,173 64	
Willow shop,	1,506 96	
Woolson House industries,	4,258 61	
		35,024 04
Equipment: —		
Broom shop,	$3,709 10	
Dowel shop,	807 69	
Equipment for experiments,	196 52	
Mop shop,	1,201 58	
Rug shop,	1,381 70	
Willow shop,	265 89	
Woolson House industries,	745 86	
Salesroom,	473 20	
		8,781 54
		$65,960 94

LIABILITIES.

Accounts payable,		27,174 49
Net assets Nov. 30, 1918,		$38,786 45
Net assets Dec. 1, 1917,		$41,855 59
Appropriation for industries,	$50,000 00	
Home work department refund,	20 22	
Worcester shop equipment,	35 00	
		50,055 22
		$91,910 81
Less net assets Nov. 30, 1918,		38,786 45
Cost of operation, 1917–18,		$53,124 36

Appropriation for the Instruction of Adult Blind in their Homes (General Acts of 1916, Chapter 201; Special Acts 1918, Chapter 106).

EXPENDITURES DEC. 1, 1917, TO NOV. 30, 1918.

Services of instructors (blind),		$3,660 00
Services of clerks,		46 25
Services of guides,		1,077 25
Travel,		2,227 87
Materials for pupils,		420 32
Incidental expenses: —		
Supplies,	$44 02	
Telephone,	34 39	
Postage,	62 62	
		141 03
		$7,572 72

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES, DEC. 1, 1917, TO NOV. 30, 1918.

The Commission has received reports during the fiscal year 1917–18 on 4,983 persons, 1,051 of whom were reported for the first time. Special service has been rendered in several ways, as follows: —

1. Training has been given or expenses provided during training to	443
2. Regular employment has been given or secured for,	211
3. Temporary work has been given or secured for,	69
4. Home industry, fostered by loans, equipment, use of canvasser, use of salesroom, etc., for,	222
5. Information and advice on medical care, special education, occupations, relief, etc., has been given to,	1,625
6. Reported to other agencies for blind,	263
7. Reported to general agencies,	429
8. Recreations, symphony and other concerts, outings, vacations, etc., have been given by others through the Commission to,	557
9. Died, unable to locate, moved, out of State, not blind, etc.,	2,050

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing report an attempt has been made to show the way in which the Commission has dealt with the tremendous and vital issues of the past year. The Commission is grateful for the spirit of co-operation which has been mani-

fested by all of its employees and those connected with its work, and looks forward to greater accomplishments in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES B. HAYES,
EDWARD E. ALLEN,
WALTER B. SNOW,
JOHN P. REYNOLDS,
AGNES C. TAFF,
JOHN D. W. BODFISH,
Commission for the Blind.

SPECIAL REPORT.

SPECIAL REPORT.

Another worker has left the Commission this year. Mr. Charles W. Holmes came to the Commission in 1906, after leaving a good position, for the purpose of helping his blind brother members. He was an unusually faithful worker for the blind of the State. He is a man of national reputation, and was called to fill his present position because of his splendid success as a man without sight.

Those of us who were on the former Commission wish to record our appreciation of Mr. James P. Munroe's services to the Commission and to the State. Mr. Munroe has been an active member for eleven years, eight years of which he was chairman. We congratulate the nation on having attached this public-spirited servant to the Federal Board for Vocational Education, as its vice-chairman. His intimate knowledge of the blind has contributed in no small measure to the success which has already attended him in his new field.

WALTER B. SNOW.
EDWARD E. ALLEN.
AGNES C. TAFF.
CHARLES B. HAYES, *General Superintendent.*

APPENDIX.

Appendix.

Reorganization.

General Acts of 1918, Chapter 266.

An Act to reorganize the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

Section 1. The Massachusetts commission for the blind, established by chapter three hundred and eighty-five of the acts of nineteen hundred and six, and acts in amendment thereof and in addition thereto, is hereby abolished. All the rights, powers and duties of said commission are hereby transferred to and shall hereafter be exercised by the commission for the blind hereby established, which shall in all respects be the lawful successor of the present commission. Immediately upon the appointment and qualification of said new commission and the taking effect of this act, all books, papers, maps, plans, charts, records, and all other documents, property or equipment in the possession of the present commission shall be delivered to the commission hereby established. All the present employees of the Massachusetts commission for the blind, shall, as temporary employees, continue to perform their usual duties upon the same terms and conditions as heretofore, and shall be eligible for permanent appointment, without civil service examination.

Section 2. The commission for the blind shall consist of a director, to be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the council, for a term of five years, and five associate members to consist of the members of the present commission for the blind for the remainder of the terms for which they were respectively appointed, and the other members to be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the council, for terms of one and four years, respectively. Thereafter, as the terms expire, the governor shall annually appoint in like manner an associate member for a term of five years, and every fifth year a director; shall fill all vacancies for the unexpired term, and may, for cause, and with the consent of the council, remove the director or any member. The director shall receive such annual salary, not exceeding three thousand five hundred dollars, as the governor and council shall determine. The associate members shall serve without compensation, but they and the director shall be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

Section 3. The director shall be the administrative and executive head of the commission. Except as otherwise provided in section four of this act, he shall administer the laws relative to the blind, shall prepare rules and regulations for consideration and adoption by the commission, shall with its approval appoint such agents, teachers and subordinate officers as the commission may deem necessary, and, subject to the approval of the governor and council, shall fix their compensation, and he may for cause and with the approval of the commission remove such agents, teachers and subordinate officers. He shall approve all bills, shall exercise the powers of the chairman of the former commission with respect to the advance authorized by section nine of said chapter three hundred and eighty-five of the acts of nineteen hundred and six, as amended by chapter one hundred and seventy-three of the acts of nineteen hundred and seven, and shall keep the accounts required by section ten of said chapter three hundred and eighty-five, as amended by said chapter one hundred and seventy-three. He shall be entitled to act as the representative of the blind in all proceedings before any department, board or commission of the commonwealth, or of any county, city or town therein.

Section 4. The commission shall adopt all necessary rules and regulations, shall authorize the establishment of, and may discontinue, schools and workshops under section four of said chapter three hundred and eighty-five, and shall fix the fees and pass upon all requests for contribution toward the support of pupils from this commonwealth in institutions outside thereof, as provided in section five of said chapter three hundred and eighty-five, and upon all requests for provision of or pay for temporary lodgings and temporary support under section six of said chapter. It shall determine what offices and positions are necessary to carry out the work relative to the blind, shall make the annual report required by section seven of said chapter, shall act in an advisory capacity with respect to the execution and administration of the laws by the director, and shall from time to time visit all schools and workshops established by authority of the commission.

Section 5. So much of this act as authorizes the appointment of a commission for the blind shall take effect upon its passage. The remainder shall take effect upon the appointment and qualification of the members thereof, but not before the first day of August in the current year. [*Approved May 31, 1918.*

Foreign Blind.

An Italian girl in the North End had been discharged from the infirmary. She was nearly blind from trachoma, and the doctor told her to be careful to keep her things separate from those of the other three members of the family, because of the tendency this disease has of spreading. Her parents were not educated, and thought the doctor was carrying things too far.

The worker explained to them in Italian the danger of blindness, and they were grateful to our office for sending them a person who could speak their language and make them understand as even a doctor could not. Lectures on the "Prevention of Blindness" are constantly being given, but these people never attend them, and were it not for this special feature of the work they would probably sooner or later become totally blind from trachoma.

An Illustration of a Child found through the Reports of the State Census.

A. B., age ten years, listener in a private school for three years, could see to count fingers at 4 feet. Obviously there was an opacity of the lens of both the eyes — surgery usually a remedy. Informed by a reputable oculist that "nothing could be done" the family accepted this child's partial blindness. The doctor's story is that, hampered by foreign language and knowing that very limited finances prohibited proper care in the local hospital, he had intended referring the case to the district nurse, who was about to be appointed, as requiring operation at the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary. In the busy life of to-day there are many slips between good intentions and fruitful actions. However, thanks to the census reports, little A. B. is now a seeing child, and several other neglected children have received proper medical attention and schooling. A simple printed form for reporting such cases to the Commission for the Blind is now being circulated, and should bring to our attention many cases which formerly burdened the conscientious oculist.

Suggestions regarding Conditions and Diseases of the Eye which might be considered as Reportable to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

Group 1, school — 16 years and under.
Group 2, industrial — 50 years and under.
Group 3, over 50 years.

1. Astigmatism, with glasses: school, 20/70 or less; industrial, 20/100 or less.
2. Hypermetropia, with glasses: school, 20/70 or less; industrial, 20/100 or less.
3. Myopia, with glasses: school, 20/40 or less when correction is 3.00 spheres or higher, or when myopia shows progress, although glasses may bring the vision up to nearly normal.

4. Glaucoma: —
   (1) The chronic type: for industry, 20/100 or less; over 50 years, under 20/200. Consideration should be given to the limitation of the field of vision.
   (2) Buphthalmos or congenital hydrophthalmos or glaucoma; school, 20/70 or less.
5. Pterygium, if inoperable and obscuring vision.
6. Conical cornea (or keratoconus): school and industry, 20/70 or less; over 50, 20/200 or less.
7. Keratitis (leucoma, macula or nebula). Old scars due to any form of inflammation of the cornea. In the interstitial type only, if vision remains low after the eye has been quiet for three months. Possibly persistently recurring cases might be considered for semi-sighted classes while under treatment. School, 20/50 or under (without atropine); industry, 20/100; over 50, 20/200.
8. Cataracts (only after final operation): —
   (1) Senile, with glasses: industry, 20/100; over 50, 20/200.
   (2) Juvenile or congenital: school, 20/50 with glasses; industry, 20/100 with glasses.
   (3) Inoperable and stationary (immature) cases.
9. Uveitis: —
   (1) Chronic: industry, 20/100; over 50, 20/200.
   (2) Vitreous opacities and floating vitreous opacities, if vision is sufficiently unreliable to disqualify for ordinary industry.
10. Congenital malformation of the iris: —
   (1) Aniridia: school, 20/70 or less; industry, 20/100 or less.
   (2) Coloboma: school, 20/70 or less; industry, 20/100 or less.
   (3) Polycoria: school, 20/70 or less; industry, 20/100 or less.
   (4) Albinism: school, 20/40 or less; industry, 20/100 or less.
11. Amblyopia (when permanent low vision has been established): school, 20/70 or less; industry, 20/100 or less.
12. Choroiditis (various types): school, 20/40 or less; industry, 20/100 or less; over 50, 20/200 or less.
13. Retinitis, chronic (probably not the albumenuric type): school, 20/50; industry, 20/100; over 50, 20/200.
14. Detachment of the retina: all cases.
15. Optic atrophy: school, 20/70 or less; industry, 20/100; over 50, 20/200 or less.
16. Nystagmus: school, 20/40 or less; industry, 20/100 or less; over 50, 20/200 or less.
17. Ptosis: after operation, if field of vision is so limited as to incapacitate the person for ordinary school or industry.

The following simple form for referring cases is placed in the hands of all ophthalmologists and eye clinics, and will be sent to any one on request: —

Purposes. — 1. To conserve eyesight.
2. To provide more adequate educational and industrial opportunities for the blind and partly blind.
3. To maintain a register of all the blind and partly blind of Massachusetts.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
4 PARK STREET
BOSTON
TEL. HAYMARKET 831

Name Age

Address

Amount of Vision

Cause

Remarks

Reported by

Date Address

Institutions, oculists, school authorities, etc., are requested to report to the Commission for the Blind: —

1. All cases where vision is 20/200 or less.
2. All school children whose vision cannot be improved beyond 20/70.
3. All cases of neglect.

UNUSUAL PUPILS REPORTED BY THE HOME TEACHERS.

In one of the Commission's shops is a man sixty-one years of age whom Mrs. Roberts, home teacher, describes as an "unusual pupil." Always sound in body and alert in mind, this man was suddenly stricken with blindness, and when Mrs. Roberts first visited him, in March, she found the financial situation such that unless he could gain economic independence the alternative would be the almshouse. She seized the first "way out" and taught him to use his fingers in reading Moon type. Then he entered one of the Commission's shops, and after an apprenticeship of two months was placed on the pay roll. From his wage he managed to save during the next four months the sum of $30 as a start toward a bank account. He is a good example of the sturdier type of blind who, not wishing to lead an idle, dependent life, desire only a protective dependence.

Mr. Vars, home teacher, gives an entirely different example in that of another middle-aged man, whose diffidence and inertia

rendered alleviation doubly difficult, but sheer persistence and tact brought results, and his earning capacity has been raised to a maximum. He does the finest reed work of any of the home pupils, seats chairs with cane, rush and fiber, and does work for the salesroom. During the past year his chair work alone has brought him $75, and he never solicits, as his work is so good that it is regularly sought.

Another pupil has raised in the past year twenty canary birds, and sold them for between $100 and $200. He has received nothing less than $6 apiece. He was formerly a piano tuner, doing a good business, and receiving a salary of $30 per week, but was obliged to give up the position because of tuberculosis. He was for a time in a sanatorium, where the Commission was able to have him cared for. He has recovered sufficiently to return home, but is still unable to tune, as the least effort brings on a fresh attack of the disease. He always loved birds and raised them in a small way, but is now making a business of it and hopes to increase his income this year. He was able to clothe himself, his wife and his little girl last year from the proceeds of the sale of the birds.

Another teacher cites fourteen new pupils who have had marked success, whose activities range through the industrial processes of chair caning, rug weaving, basketry, handcraft of every description and typewriting. One of them, a former teacher of piano, has had only one lesson in touch typewriting, yet shows progress that warrants belief in future success.

Another pupil, fifty-seven years of age, a widower, is afflicted with locomotor ataxia and fast-failing sight, which makes the pursuance of his daily duties increasingly hazardous. He yet manages, by means of canvassing and "odd jobs," to support himself. He learned to read Moon type in one lesson, and the home teacher reports that his expression of appreciation is most gratifying, and his brave and cheerful spirit is an inspiration. Measures are being taken to insure him, if possible, against total loss of sight, and to provide a trade that may afford a "way out" in the event of such a calamity.

Woolson House.[1]

When considering the opportunities open to our blind friends, we hope the public will not forget the James A. Woolson House in Cambridge, which provides a home for seven blind women. In 1909 the house, which is situated at the corner of Harvard

[1] By Miss Sarah A. Drew, acting chairman of the house committee.

and Inman streets, was presented as a memorial gift from Mrs. Woolson to the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Adult Blind. Since that time the rooms have been constantly in use, largely by blind women who are employed at weaving and caning in the shop. Besides these regular residents the personnel of the house changes from time to time — guests of the Commission are sometimes entertained, and latterly, blind students studying in Boston have been members of the family.

Miss Mary B. Bradbury is matron and makes the home life so attractive that many Massachusetts girls look back with pleasure to their days at the Woolson House.

For the last three years the house has served as a social center, where blind women living in neighboring towns may meet once a month for a pleasant and profitable afternoon.

Each year 60 or 70 blind persons and their friends meet together, and a Christmas festival marks the season. Many other social gatherings occur, and the State home teacher makes a weekly visit, helping any one who may need lessons.

The donor of the house and the committee in charge have wished that in the month of August the house should be thrown open to vacation guests from more remote parts of the State. The records show that in August, 1917, 23 blind women, 9 of whom came for a first visit, enjoyed such hospitality. The summer of 1918 saw 30 visitors, each of whom spent a week amid pleasant surroundings, which afforded an opportunity for renewing old friendships and forming new ones. Funds for auto rides and trips down the harbor are usually provided by friends. The Woolson House is a well-grounded plant in the community, and we hope to see its work grow and blossom, for it contributes to the welfare of the blind women of the State. It furthers in all possible ways the work of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

Obligations to Other Agencies.

The Commission is greatly indebted to the following agencies, which have contributed money in the form of loans and gifts to different blind persons: The Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Adult Blind, the Invalid Aid Society, the Lend-a-Hand Society, the Morgan Memorial Society, the Provident Loan Association, the local overseers of the poor, the Associated Charities, and Country Week. Through the interest of Mrs. Samuel Wright Simpson of the State Flower Mission 200 attractive baskets were distributed at Thanksgiving, and the same at Christmas and Easter.

Volunteer Service.

Never before in the history of this Commission, or probably any state commission for the blind in this country, has there been such definite and organized co-operation between the seeing and the blind as that which obtains in such large measure and practical form through the Special Aid Blind Relief Corps. The following table, compiled from the monthly reports of the active workers in the corps, demonstrates that the main effort on the part of each worker has been to ascertain what form of work, as well as recreation, was needed by the blind person visited, to supply as far as possible both the work and the recreation, and, in some cases, the ways and means of securing them.

The number of blind persons seen by the members of the Special Aid Blind Relief Corps, the number of visits paid to their homes, workshops and schools, and the specific forms of service rendered are as follows: —

1. Social calls and visits on blind persons in their homes have been given 180 times to, ... 58
2. Reading aloud has been done 417 times for, ... 188
3. Braille writing and Braille lessons have been given 125 times to 41
4. Transcribing music, letters, cards, etc., into Braille done 15 times for, ... 4
5. Lessons in typewriting and the operation of the dictaphone have been given 32 times to, ... 15
6. Service as guide, including frequent loan of automobile with guide, given 412 times to, ... 231
7. Shopping and errands done 8 times for, ... 2
8. Recreations, automobile rides, luncheons, concerts, plays, club meetings, current events courses at the Thomas Park House have been given 58 times to, ... 113
9. Visiting boarding houses, employment agencies, shops and factories in behalf of blind persons 47 times.
10. Material and financial aid in the way of boxes of clothing, hats, yarn, loan of typewriters and occasional gifts of money given 30 times to, ... 10
11. Industrial aid in the way of securing positions and obtaining work has been given in the following lines: piano tuning, 42 times (including 8 annual in schools) for 4 persons; chair repairing, 27 times for 6 persons; positions secured, 10 times for 10 persons; vending space, 2 times for 2 persons; industrial aid not itemized, 12 times for 9 persons; total, 93 times for 31 persons.

The work of the Special Aid Blind Relief Corps has resulted in the sending of one trained worker for the blind to France, and four others (two volunteer and two paid workers) to fill executive positions in the work for the returned blinded soldier at the Red Cross Institute for the Blind in Baltimore.

Another important gain has been that the members of the corps, through their activities and interest, have helped to educate public opinion so that when our blind soldiers and civilians are re-educated and prepared to take up the task of earning a livelihood they will not meet the skepticism and prejudice which have been so disheartening and often disastrous in the case of our civilian blind.

Over 200 Massachusetts ladies, who are now trained to help our men in social ways, such as guiding, reading aloud, visiting and tactfully stimulating the depressed, are also fully alive to the fact that the blind will not be content to accept charity, but will demand a chance to again earn their own livelihood. These admirable results must be ascribed to Miss Rose E. Trainor, teacher of the classes, director of the corps, and member of the Commission staff, herself blind. Her sincere and direct message, and her power of presenting the facts in a forceful manner, have sustained the enthusiasm and service of her hearers.

The course is composed of four lectures: (1) "Learning How to be Blind;" (2) "The Relation of the Blind to the Seeing;" (3) "Amusement and Employment for the Blind;" (4) "The Resources Offered in the State for Aiding the Blind." It also includes four lessons in Braille and visits conducted to all the resources for the blind in and about Boston.

Furthermore, the public interest which war conditions have created in the problems likely to confront blind soldiers has had much to do with opening up this way of help for our own civilian blind.

The large influential membership of the Special Aid Society for American Preparedness, its carefully formulated plans, and the support which it has given throughout the whole field, have contributed to the real public spirit in the present existing problems, and we feel that the society will prove a permanent asset to the Commission and to the State.